



The Amesbury Beat

By: Officer Tom Hanshaw

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Cell phones; the mere mention of them can bring about a number of thoughts and opinions. Many older residents are reluctant to use them while younger folks wonder how any generation survived without them. Thanks to advances in the world of technology, more and more people are relying on the device and no one can doubt they are pretty cool. In fact, today you can hold a better computer in your hand than NASA used to put a man on the moon in 1969. It seems you can find an APP for just about anything online and one can only wonder where we will be in a decade or two.

While a cellular phone can be a lifesaver in an emergency, it can also contribute to a tragedy, as a distraction in a car crash. A cell phone can provide valuable evidence when used to capture an image following a crime but can also become evidence when used to send inappropriate pictures. Criminals are also cashing in on valuable cell phones making them a target in burglaries and robberies. Your cell phone in the hands of the wrong person can also result in unauthorized access to financial and personal information. Remember, plenty of criminals have cell access too, even from other countries, so be wary of unsolicited calls.

A couple weeks ago, you may have heard about or even received a message concerning problems with the nationwide 911 emergency cell service. As technology evolves, so does the risk of something going wrong. The lesson learned from that experience was the importance of updating the call list in every cell phone. Be sure to include business numbers for your local emergency services, just in case the system malfunctions in the future. If you have older friends or relatives with a cell phone, help them to update their contact lists as well. It's better to have a number and not need it than to struggle finding an alternate number in an emergency.

As I mentioned in last week's column, I will be retiring this summer so thought it would be interesting to include a "flashback" paragraph or two each week, reflecting back on memories from our community policing scrapbooks over the years. I'll start this week with an event from 2018 and go back in time until reaching 1996. I also wanted to reassure readers that it is our intention to keep this column going, even after I step aside. I plan to continue working as a special officer and hope to share writing duties with other members of the department later this year so "The Amesbury Beat" will go on.

2018 was a busy year with many interesting stories and events but I chose the excitement of the Small Business Revolution "Main Street" effort. The quest to showcase the City on the Deluxe reality show united the community and introduced us to "#myamesbury." Quite a few Chamber of Commerce representatives greeted the production crew at Logan Airport, a huge event followed at Stage Two Cinema and the city fell just shy after a week long of online voting. Although we were in the middle of winter, community spirit warmed the city for young and old during the revolution as residents put Amesbury on the map. In addition, the effort launched a number of civic initiatives in hopes of making the city a more attractive destination for businesses and visitors.

